

Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Administration Committee

Final Meeting Summary April 16, 1999

Approved May 12, 1999

Present: Doug Hurley, Chair, Tomio Moriguchi, Connie Niva, Patricia Notter, Judie Stanton

Absent: Peter Bennett, Vice Chair, Greg Devereux, Bob Dilger, Representative Ruth Fisher, Senator Dino Rossi, Ken Smith

Others in Attendance: Kim Becklund (Washington Transportation Alliance), Steve Excell (Washington Roundtable), Roy Francis (King County), Charlie Howard (Washington State Department of Transportation), Jack Locke (City of Auburn), Mary McCumber (Puget Sound Regional Council), Gary Molyneaux (King County), Rick Olson (PSRC), Dan Rude (Transportation Improvement Board), Charlie Shell (City of Seattle), Gretchen White (WSDOT)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Committee approved the summary of the March 19th meeting as drafted.

Presentation of Case Studies from Other Jurisdictions

Daniel Malarkey of ECONorthwest and Patricia Boies, Committee staff, presented case studies from jurisdictions from outside Washington State that offer different governmental approaches to providing transportation services. The five jurisdictions presented were:

- (1) Michigan, where Governor Engler introduced the “Build Michigan II” Plan in 1997, which proposed to provide additional funding for road projects, reform transportation agencies, and expand state control of the road system;
- (2) San Diego, California, where the regional planning organization, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), has project selection and funding powers;
- (3) Vancouver, B.C., where a newly-created regional entity called TransLink assumed responsibility for managing roads and transit throughout the region and gained authority for planning, service levels, and funding;

- (4) Georgia, where loss of federal highway funds due to high pollution levels recently led Governor Roy Barnes to sign legislation creating the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, with broad powers over all transportation and development projects in the 13-county metropolitan area of Atlanta; and
- (5) New Zealand, which has privatized elements of its transportation system over the last decade and is moving toward a system of public-owned road companies, financed exclusively with user fees.

Enclosed with this meeting summary are copies of the presentations on these five jurisdictions. In addition, the Committee's draft background paper on Governance Structures provides further detail.

Committee Discussion

The Committee members and others in attendance discussed the jurisdictions presented and compared them with our system here in Washington. The Vancouver and San Diego models sparked the most interest. By consolidating responsibility for transit and roads into one authority that receives contributions from the Province, existing local sources, and possible new sources, the Vancouver model combines planning, funding, and programming in a single entity. Like the Puget Sound Regional Council, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serves as both the Metropolitan Planning Organization for federal purposes and the regional planning agency under state law. Under California's system, SANDAG receives not only federal funds but also gas tax revenues and state and local sales tax revenues. This state and local revenue gives SANDAG greater authority to implement projects in its regional transportation plan than PSRC, which allocates only federal funds. Sydney, Australia, was cited for its seamless connections among modes of transportation, including ferry, train, and airport services. In the Australian state of New South Wales, a single Minister of Transport governs all transportation services, enhancing operational integration.

Those present at the meeting frequently cited the strong connection among planning, funding, and implementation as the most positive aspect of some of the alternative governance systems. Participants discussed what characteristics would be desirable in a system in Washington State. Since passage of the Growth Management Act in 1990, much land use and transportation coordination and planning has occurred. Any potential reform efforts in Washington should recognize and build on this recent increased cooperation. Participants also cautioned that differences in the regions across the state may necessitate a differential system, one that recognizes that concerns in rural counties are not the same as those in congested urban counties.

The Committee considered the following evaluative criteria that could be used to evaluate proposals addressing the governance structure for transportation services:

- Does the proposal align authority and responsibility to plan, fund, and implement transportation services?
- Does the proposal balance the desire for local accountability with the need for a systems perspective?
- Does the proposal create transportation systems able to innovate and change?
- Does the proposal have the potential for inspiring public support and increasing public confidence in the governance of the system?
- Does the proposal enable comparison among all modes of transportation, increasing the likelihood that the projects that will be most beneficial will get funded, constructed, and maintained?
- Does the proposal have the potential to be implemented?

Returning to the theme of aligning funding authority with implementation responsibility, the Chair acknowledged the inevitable tension between state and regional governments on the issue, as well as between regional and local governments. He encouraged Committee members to consider what alignment might work best for Washington State or regions within the state.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **May 12, 1999**, and will include a joint meeting with the Revenue Committee, in which the revenue implications of some of the governance systems previously discussed will be presented. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. The full Commission will meet in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. All meetings will take place at the SeaTac Marriott Hotel, located at 3201 South 176th in the City of SeaTac.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.